



Town of Hopkinton

Office of Select Board

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**SELECT BOARD
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
Monday, November 22, 2021
Draft**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sabrina Dunlap called this Budget Work Session meeting of the Select Board to order at 5:32 p.m. on Monday, November 22, 2021. With the meeting being held at Town Hall, Chair Dunlap introduced the members of the Board.

Select Board

Members Present: Sabrina Dunlap, Ken Traum, Anna Wells, Jeffrey Donohoe, and Steven Whitley

Staff Present: Neal Cass, Town Administrator; Cara Johnson, Administrative/Assessing Assistant; Carol Harless, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Chief Thomas Hennessey, Police, via Zoom

Town of Hopkinton - Select Board

Consent Agenda

November 22, 2021

<u>Item</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Comment</u>
AP MANIFEST			
AP Manifest dated 11/22/2021 ch #s 67175 - 67215	11/22/2021	Approve	\$57,369.95
PAYROLL			
Employee Payroll	11/22/2021	Approve	\$75,795.81
PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT			
245-032-000 92 Pamela Drive (eld exempt not applied)	11/22/2021	Approve	\$1,590.00
224-017-000 146 Deer Path (deeded; owner chng after MS-1)	11/22/2021	Approve	\$1,228.00
208-044-000 130 Rolfe Pond Drive (deeded; owner chng aft MS-1; amt corr)	11/22/2021	Approve	\$3,139.00
OTHER			
Personnel Action Form Louise Bishop (new hire - part-time)	11/22/2021	Approve	
Right to Bury Certificate (1 of 2) Drew McEvoy F-321-4 & 3	11/22/2021	Approve	
Right to Bury Certificate (2 of 2) Drew McEvoy F-322-4 & 3	11/22/2021	Approve	

ADMINISTRATIVE:

The Board reviewed documents for signature, and approved (4-0) the Consent Agenda, taking the following action on a motion made by Mr. Traum and seconded by Chair Dunlap.

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Wells, and Donohoe voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 4-0.**

The Board reviewed the Public Meeting Minutes of Monday, November 15, 2021. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Chair Dunlap, to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2021.

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Wells, and Donohoe, voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 4-0.**

The Board reviewed the Non-public Meeting Minutes of Monday, November 15, 2021. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Chair Dunlap, to approve the Non-public Meeting Minutes of Monday, November 15, 2021. Mr. Traum noted that the minutes were not sealed.

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Wells, and Donohoe voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 4-0.** Mr. Whitley arrived after the vote.

BUDGET PRESENTATIONS:

Carol Harless, Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Noting that while there aren't many changes in her proposed operating budget, Ms. Harless pointed out the small increase in the software budget, as the software company charges typically rise 3% each year, and the increase on the mortgage search line, which is due to higher charges from the service provider. Mr. Traum inquired whether the increase could be passed along to those requiring a mortgage search and Ms. Harless indicated that, although there will likely be a decreased need for mortgage searches next year, she would be open to increasing the fee. Moving to the professional services line item, Ms. Harless noted that she had not yet received the bill for the vital record documents that have been preserved this year. A brief discussion regarding preservation of vital records took place among Mr. Whitley, Ms. Harless, and Ms. Wells, and it was noted that although approximately twenty books have been preserved, there are many remaining. Turning to the conferences and training section, Ms. Harless pointed out that, after a year of no in-person conferences or training sessions, the Town Clerk and Tax Collector Associations are returning to in-person gatherings, and an increased request has been added to next year's budget, to cover costs for these important and informative meetings. Although the bill has not been received for recently-ordered printed envelopes, there has been a significant increase in the cost, resulting in a higher budget request, as well, in this area for next year. Continuing through a mostly unchanged operating budget, Ms. Harless pointed out that the increase in the dog tag line is due to the growth of the dog population during the pandemic, which resulted in a need for more dog tags. With no further questions regarding the operating budget, it was noted that with three elections next year, as compared to one this year, the increased requests of most lines in the election budget, including the proposed \$2,500.00 for staff overtime wages, are a direct reflection of the increased number of elections. Regarding the wages portion of the budget, Ms. Harless highlighted that the salary for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector position during her term is lower than it had been prior to her election and pointed out that, with next year being an election year, this seemed like an opportune time to propose an increase. Moving to the full-time and part-time wage line items, Ms. Harless noted that she hopes to hire someone for the full-time position again, so the office will be fully staffed early next year. Mr. Whitley, Ms. Harless, and Mr. Traum engaged in a discussion regarding the next term, and the possibilities of being able to offer residents more online services or the opportunity to use credit or debit cards with in-office transactions. Ms. Wells inquired about online services possibly requiring fewer staff hours, and Ms. Harless pointed

out that the same number of staff hours would be necessary, since online services still require in-office personnel to complete all the same steps as in-person transactions. With no further questions, Ms. Harless and the Board exchanged thanks.

Chief Hennessey, Police: Beginning with the wages and overtime budgets, Chief Hennessey pointed out that, with the smaller staff, there is an increase in overtime wages requested for next year. Moving to the contract fees section, it was noted that there is a small increase requested, due to the increase in each area of this section. Chief Hennessey highlighted that he is waiting to hear back from the department's software provider regarding a disputed fee from this year; he hopes this may result in a \$7,000.00 decrease in the budget for next year, but felt it was best to keep that amount in the proposed budget. He also noted that, moving forward, a new software system may become necessary, as the current software will become obsolete within the next few years. Focusing on the requested increase for gas and oil, Chief Hennessey pointed out that he had done research and calculations based on gas prices late this past summer, but since gas prices have increased so quickly, the proposed increase will likely not cover the actual costs. Mr. Traum inquired whether electric cars might be considered at some point, which prompted a discussion about the practicality of electric or hybrid cruisers, given the wear and tear on most police vehicles; Chief Hennessey indicated he was not opposed to looking into it. With no additional questions, Chief Hennessey and the Board exchanged thanks.

DISCUSSION OF THE BUDGET:

Chair Dunlap proposed turning to the budget discussion, with Mr. Traum suggesting they begin with the revenue side and commending Mr. Cass for his work on the revenues. There was a review of the previous weeks' topics, including the status of St. Methodios PILOT, and Mr. Cass said he would remind them of the deadline. Regarding motor vehicles, discussion ensued among the Board members, and it was agreed that it may be best to not overestimate the revenue in this area, due to the increase in vehicle costs and low available inventory. Moving through the revenue line items, it was noted that the building permit estimate had increased by \$5,000.00. Regarding ambulance service, discussion ensued pertaining to the specifics of when the town is able to charge for particular services, and Chair Dunlap noted that it would be worth researching whether there may be more cases in which the town could charge; Mr. Cass indicated he would look into this. Continuing through the lines, it was noted by Mr. Traum that the sale of town property had especially positive figures. Mr. Cass pointed out that agreements with some residents whose properties had been deeded to the town are now paying to buy back their properties, so the town is already seeing that income. Additionally, the approximately eight properties the town will be auctioning in late winter or early spring will likely bring at least \$100,000.00, so the figures estimated are likely on the conservative side. A lengthy discussion ensued, covering details of the fund balance and potential applications of funds from ARPA (the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021), including paying off debt, one-time payments, and pre-payment of bonds, and ultimately, it was agreed that an application of funds toward road salt and shimming and paving would make the most sense.

With no further discussion of revenues, the focus turned to operating expenses. The following information summarizes the results of the discussion.

2022 Budget-Select Board Major Changes From Original Request-OPERATING BUDGET

Item	Department Request	Select Board Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
4140-110 Town Clerk/Tax Collector 2022: 2019-2022 term \$58,811 2022-2025=\$68,811	68,811	63,800	(5,011)	-7.28%
4140 - Benefit Change Benefit cost change due to Clerk/Collector salary change	25,943	24,856	(1,088)	-4.19%
4140-390 Professional Services Document vital record preservation (KoFile-2 books @ \$3,000 each.	6,000	3,000	(3,000)	-50.00%
4153-320 Legal Fees Legal services provided by Donahue, Tucker & Ciandella & attendance at Town Meeting. Also covers Planning & Zoning Boards legal fees. 2021: Settlement \$45,750.	25,000	20,000	(5,000)	-20.00%
4191-390 Professional Services CAI Planning map maint. contract \$550 MP Chapter/Ordinance/ Regs/build out /stenography/impact fee methodology/PB consult services \$4,200 NE Documents scanning PB files \$4,500 TOTAL: \$9,250	9,250	4,750	(4,500)	-48.65%
4194-410-11 Electricity - Horseshoe Tavern \$25/mo. X 12mo. = \$300	300	-	(300)	-100.00%
4194-420-11 Water - Horseshoe Tavern \$125/Qtr X 4=\$500	500	-	(500)	-100.00%
4195-390 Professional Services	5,000	4,000	(1,000)	-20.00%

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Monument repairs 2019: Town \$2,000 + Trust: \$21,712 Landscaper=\$23,712. 2020: Town \$3,000 + Trust: \$22,000 Landscaper=\$25,000. 2021: Town \$3,000 + Trust: \$22,000 Landscaper=\$25,000. 2022: Town \$5,000 + Trust: \$33,589 Landscaper=\$38,589.				
4312-380 Shimming/Paving For the paving, shimming, chip sealing of paved roads and on-going maintenance. 2022: Projected Roads: Start rebuilding Briar Hill, top coat on Pine St. & Bound Tree. 2016 Note: Select Board adjusted to 5.0% increase moving forward per year. \$161,000 additional to come from ARPA Funds.	389,025	228,025	(161,000)	-41.39%
4312-683 Salt Purchase road salt. 2022: Salt prices increasing 47% due to shipping issues globally. \$39,000 additional to come from ARPA Funds	124,000	85,000	(39,000)	-31.45%
4723-980 TAN Interest Interest on a TAN, if required.	2,000	1	(1,999)	-99.95%
	655,829	433,432	(222,398)	-33.91%

Chair Dunlap moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Mr. Traum.

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Wells, Donohoe, and Whitley voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 5-0.**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cara Johnson
 Administrative/Assessing Assistant